

6. (Amended) An etching method for exposing a layer of Cu by etching a layer of SiN_x on the layer of Cu, the method, wherein;

a step in which a processing gas containing a gas constituted of C, H, and F and O₂ is raised to plasma and an SiN_x layer on a Cu layer is etched using a photoresist

A2 layer having a specific pattern formed therein, thereby exposing said Cu layer; and

a step in which H₂ is introduced into said processing chamber and an H₂ plasma process is implemented on said Cu layer that has become exposed by raising the H₂ to plasma.

12. (New) An etching method according to claim 6, wherein;

A3 a step implemented after said etching step and before said H₂ plasma processing step, in which said photoresist layer is ashed.

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1-3 and 5 without prejudice or disclaimer, amended claims 4 and 6, and added new claim 12. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hung et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,380,096); rejected claims 1, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Yang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,162,583); rejected claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lin (U.S. Patent No. 6,093,632) in view of Wong et al. (Journal of Vacuum Science & Technology, No. 6, 2393 (Nov./Dec., 1992)); and rejected claims 10